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Aid UNITA? No

Support for Savimbi is support for South Africa and apartheid.

For years the South African government has pursued a two-pronged strategy designed to achieve the survival of apartheid: pervasive repression at home and military destabilization of unfriendly neighboring states.

Pretoria's neighbors who have elected to stand by South Africa's 22 million blacks have done so at a considerable price. South African defense forces have more than once stormed into tiny landlocked Lesotho, dispatched assassination squads to Zimbabwe and bankrolled efforts to bring down the government of Mozambique. The Botha regime has spent more than \$1 million a day to sustain its illegal military occupation of Namibia. The idea has been to cut off the subjugated black majorities of South Africa and Namibia from any nearby governments that would assist them in winning their freedom. Cut them off and in the process replace governments that would challenge the apartheid system with regimes more to Pretoria's liking.

Perhaps the leading victim of these regional military efforts has been Angola. For 10 years it has been invaded, occupied, bombed and terrorized by South African forces. For the same period, Pretoria has tried to bring down the Luanda government through its military support for Jonas Savimbi, head of UNITA, the guerrilla force locked in a struggle with the Angolan government. South African forces have supplied Savimbi with arms, helped with his planning and flown his air cover. UNITA and South African soldiers not long ago were discovered in each other's company in northern Angola attempting to blow up a Gulf Oil Co. installation.

Consequences of the apartheid system are hardly confined within South Africa's borders. They are felt throughout the region. In Angola, UNITA is Pretoria's choice of government, Savimbi its heavily subsidized delegate.

Unfortunately, what is broadly known in all of Africa is apparently not so broadly known here. Outside support for Jonas Savimbi amounts to support for South Africa and all that it represents, plain and simple. For this reason passage of legislation introduced by Reps. Claude Pepper (D-Fla.) and Jack Kemp (R-N.Y.), proposing \$27 million in American aid to UNITA, would do incalculable damage to efforts under way inside and outside South Africa to dismantle apartheid and achieve Namibia's independence.

Moreover, the United States while diplomatically recognizing South Africa, would be perceived across Africa and beyond as allied with Pretoria in its ongoing campaign to destabilize Angola, a country that enjoys diplomatic relations with all the world's major nations except the United States and South Africa.

Twenty-seven million dollars (or perhaps much more; The Post has reported that the Pentagon and CIA are pressing for a far larger commitment) would be certain to buy us the following: broad anger from the oppressed blacks of South Africa and Namibia; continent-wide alienation; a hopeless U.S.-led Namibian independence diplomacy; world bafflement and, of course, the enduring but understandable hostility of the Angolan people.

Why, then, would Congress even consider such a measure? Angola, despite its Marxist orientation, pursues its important relations with the West. We are Angola's leading trading partner. Before Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos learned we were considering sponsorship of his government's overthrow, he worked cooperatively with the

Reagan administration in efforts to negotiate with South Africa an allowance of internationally supervised elections for Namibia.

South Africa, its economy in shreds, its cities and townships in turmoil, is perhaps nearing some readiness to negotiate toward the dismantling of its own ugly policies as well as the independence of Namibia. Why, then, would Congress choose this time—or any time—to consider what amounts to a supplement for South Africa's program for regional expansionism?

Often cited as the answer is the Cuban troop presence in Angola. But the Cubans, who've crossed no borders and serve as a rear guard to Angolan forces, are only in Angola to help the government survive constant South African invasions. Southern Africa's problems are not caused by Cuba. They are caused by South Africa.

When South Africa desists in its regional menace, it is commonly agreed by all parties, the Cubans will return to Havana. They will not so surely return to Havana if through the Pepper-Kemp bill we cast our lot with Pretoria.

When will we learn what Africans would have us understand? Oppression and racial subjugation are as worthy of American opposition as communism.

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